

Calendars and Feast Days in Scandinavia

Fritz Juengling Ph.D., AG®

The Julian and Gregorian calendars

The Julian calendar had been in use for centuries. It was introduced in 46 BC by Julius Caesar. A leap day was added to February every fourth year= 365.25 days. That is too long. The year is 365.2425 days. The year, especially Easter, which is tied to the vernal equinox, was getting 'off.'

In 1582, the calendar was off by 10 days. Pope Gregory XIII commissioned a reform to correct the aberration. Catholic countries, including France and parts of the Low Countries and Germany, adopted the Gregorian calendar right away, usually 1582 or 1583. Non-Catholic areas were slow to follow. Denmark and Norway switched in 1700, where Sweden did not finally do so until 1753, although it had begun to do so in 1700.

Sweden's change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar is a complicated one. Sweden decided to switch beginning in 1700, but only by eliminating leap years until the change would be complete in 1740. During this 40-year period, the Swedish calendar would be off from every other calendar in the world. The leap day was omitted in 1700, but, surprisingly, not in 1704 or 1708. In 1712, the King recognized the problem and decided to make a change—back to the Julian calendar! So, the day that was omitted in 1700 was restored in 1712 and Sweden has the ignominious distinction of having 30 days in February for one year, 1712. Finland follows Sweden in this respect, as it was under Swedish rule at the time. See: Wikipedia, "Adoption of the Gregorian calendar."

Calendar switch from Julian to Gregorian

For more detailed information on the Julian and Gregorian calendars and when various jurisdictions switched to the latter, see these websites:

<http://www.polysyllabic.com/?q=book/export/html/25> Good explanation and gives conversion dates

for various regions

<http://www.searchforancestors.com/utility/gregorian.html> Good explanation and gives conversion

dates for various regions

<http://europeanhistory.about.com/od/religionandthought/a/introgregcalend.htm> Some explanation with

a few conversion years for various regions

http://www.sizes.com/time/cal_Gregadoption.htm conversion dates for various regions.
Organised by

century rather than alphabetically.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar Very good explanation of the Gregorian calendar

with adoptions for various regions

http://www.ortelius.de/kalender/greg_en.php Good explanation and gives conversion dates for various regions

Julian to Gregorian converters

<http://www.calendarhome.com/> Click on "Calculate," then "Convert a date." Converts both ways and has numerous other calendars, including Julian. It also gives the day of the week. Great converter. No scrolling.

<http://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/> Converts both ways and has numerous other calendars, including Julian. It also gives the day of the week and has an explanation of each calendar.

Day of Week finders (The two sites above will also give the day of the week)

http://www.calculatorcat.com/free_calculators/day_of_week.phtml put in a date (Gregorian only) and

day of week will come up. Nothing more.

<http://www.csgnetwork.com/dayoftheweekcalc.html>

Feast Day converters

According to the liturgical calendar, each Sunday and many other days had a feast day associated with it. Often, priests indicated a date by only its feast day name. Therefore, one must be able to recognize and know how to convert the feast days to Gregorian dates. Here are feast day converters for Sweden Denmark and Norway:

- Denmark: FamilySearch.org>Search>Wiki>type 'Denmark in the search box>Feast Day Calendar (Moveable) or Feast Day Lists (Fixed and Moveable)

To go directly to the Moveable Feast Days for Denmark page, go here:

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Moveable_Feast_Day_Calendar_for:_Denmark

To go directly to the Fixed and Moveable Feast Days for Denmark page, go here:

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Fixed_and_Moveable_Feast_Days_for:_Denmark

- Norway: FamilySearch.org>Search>Wiki>type 'Norway' in the search box>Feast Day Calendar (Moveable) or Feast Day Lists (Fixed and Moveable)

To go directly to the Moveable Feast Days for Norway page, go here:

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Moveable_Feast_Day_Calendar_for_Norway

To go directly to the Fixed and Moveable Feast Days for Norway page, go here:

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Fixed_and_Moveable_Feast_Days_for_Norway

- Sweden: FamilySearch.org>Search>Wiki>type 'Sweden' in the search box>Feast Day Calendar (Moveable) or Feast Day Lists (Fixed and Moveable) [A link to the former is found under "Sweden Research Tools," but links to both are found at the bottom of the page.]

To go directly to the Moveable Feast Days for Sweden page, go here: here:

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Moveable_Feast_Day_Calendar_for_Sweden

To go directly to the Fixed and Moveable Feast Days for Sweden page, go here:

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Fixed_and_Moveable_Feast_Days_for_Sweden

Bukke, Inger M., Peer K. Kristensen, Finn A. Thomsen. *The Comprehensive Genealogical Feast Day Calendar*. Bountiful, Utah: Thomsen's Genealogical Center, c1983. This can be found online in the FamilySearch catalog. See: <https://familysearch.org/catalog-search> and search by either author or book title. If you want to see the online version and have searched by author's name (Inger Bukke), you must choose the listing:

"The Comprehensive genealogical feast day calendar"

Author: Kristensen, Peer K.; Thomsen, Finn A.; Bukke, Inger M.

Or go directly to the site:

https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE1778711

Some practice problems:

Feast Days are an important part of the liturgical calendar. Many events will be recorded by a feast day rather than a date. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the concept of feast days and how to convert them to a date.

General Questions:

Before you start this activity, you might want to open three tabs and go to the wiki pages for Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. By doing this, you can work with all three countries at the same time.

	Fixed or Moveable?	Sweden	Denmark	Norway
Example: Trinitatis 1617	F M	15 June	15 June	15 June
Sexagesima 1616	F M			
Sexagesima 1716	F M			
Sexagesima 1816	F M			
Pascha (Easter) 1648	F M			
Pascha (Easter) 1748	F M			
Pascha (Easter) 1848	F M			
6 p. Trinitatis 1820	F M			
Paulus & Petrus 1820	F M			

Why does Sweden match the other two countries in the 1600s and 1800s, but not in the 1700s?